

# Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Fact Sheet

## Chlamydia

Chlamydia (cla-MID-ee-ah) is a **Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD)** caused by a type of bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Chlamydia can infect men, women, and newborns. Chlamydia is the most common bacterial STD in the United States.

### How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is passed from one person to another during vaginal and anal sex. It may also be spread to the throat through oral sex. Newborn babies whose mothers have chlamydia can get it during birth, causing serious eye infections and pneumonia (a serious lung infection).

### What are the signs and symptoms of chlamydia?

#### **About 8 out of 10 WOMEN with chlamydia have NO SYMPTOMS!**

If you do have symptoms they could include:

- Fluid from the vagina that smells, looks, or feels different
- Bleeding from the vagina or the anus that is not normal
- Pain with urination (peeing)
- Lower stomach pain, especially when having sex

#### **About 5 out of 10 MEN with chlamydia have NO SYMPTOMS!**

If you do have symptoms they could include:

- Fluid from the head of the penis or the anus that is not normal
- Pain or itching on the head of the penis
- Pain with urination (peeing)

**Even without symptoms, a person with chlamydia CAN GIVE chlamydia to their sex partner(s).**

### Is chlamydia serious?

- **Yes!** Even without symptoms, chlamydia can cause serious damage.
- **Women** who have chlamydia can get Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a very bad infection in the lower abdomen. PID happens when the bacteria move up into the womb, female organs and surrounding areas. PID can cause scars and other damage that makes women sterile (unable to have children). PID can also make women more likely to have a “tubal pregnancy,” which can cause death.
- **Men** can sometimes develop an infection of the testicles and scrotum (sack) that causes pain and swelling.
- **Plus**, a person with chlamydia has a greater chance of **giving or getting HIV**.

## How is chlamydia treated?

- Your health care provider will give you medicine to cure chlamydia infection.
- If you have chlamydia, your partner(s) must be treated even if they have no symptoms. If they are not treated, they can give the infection back to you, or infect others.
- If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, be sure to tell your doctor or nurse.

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## How can I avoid getting chlamydia?

- Abstinence (not having sex) is the only sure way to avoid infection.
- Plan Ahead: Think about protecting yourself. Talk about STDs and the need to protect yourself with your sex partner(s).
- Use a male condom with each sex partner.
- If a male condom cannot be used properly, the female condom can be used.

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## HIV is also a STD like chlamydia!

When you get infected with chlamydia, you could also be getting HIV.  
Birth control pills or a birth control shot cannot protect you against chlamydia, HIV or other STDs.

Using **condoms** correctly every time you have sex can protect you from Chlamydia HIV, and other STDs.

### **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STDs and PROTECTING MYSELF?**

**In English**, Call toll free: National STD/HIV hotlines at 1+(800) 342-2437 or 1+(800) 227-8922.

**In Spanish**, Call toll free: 1+(800) 344-7432 **TTY for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**: 1+(800) 243-7889

Talk to your own health care provider or call your county health department by looking for the telephone number in the phone book (white pages) under county government. Ask to speak to someone in the STD clinic or the STD program for more information about chlamydia.